

TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

BARTON W. LABELLE - Chairman
JACK L. GINGRASS - Vice Chairman
JOHN C. KENNEDY
BETTY JEAN AWREY
TED B. WAHBY
LOWELL B. JACKSON

LH 0-0 (3/98)

STATE OF MICHIGAN



JOHN ENGLER, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION BUILDING, 425 WEST OTTAWA POST OFFICE BOX 30050, LANSING MICHIGAN 48909
PHONE: (517) 373-2090 FAX NO.: (517) 373-0167 TDD/TTY - MICHIGAN RELAY CENTER (800) 649-3777

JAMES R. DeSANA, DIRECTOR

April 21, 2000

The Honorable Philip Hoffman, Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation
Michigan State Senate
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909

The Honorable Judith L. Scranton, Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation
Michigan House of Representatives
P. O. Box 30014
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Senator Hoffman and Representative Scranton:

Enclosed is the report which addresses the requirement of Section 337 in Enrolled Senate Bill No.372, the Fiscal Year 2000 Appropriations Bill for the Michigan Department of Transportation, as signed into law by Governor Engler on July 27, 1999.

Sec. 337 requires for fiscal 2000: *"The department and the department of state police shall jointly prepare a report for the house and senate appropriations subcommittees on transportation that provides a cost effective strategic direction for the motor carrier weight enforcement program. The report shall minimally address the role of existing weigh stations and the use of new technologies for mobile enforcement. This report shall be submitted not later than April 1, 2000."*

The joint Weigh Station Strategies Committee, consisting of representatives of the Michigan Department of Transportation and Motor Carrier Division of State Police, established to evaluate and recommend actions to improve truck weight enforcement in Michigan, will continue their cooperative efforts to develop and implement new enforcement strategies for the 21st Century.

The report is submitted to you in fulfillment of this requirement. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either me or Louis Lambert, Deputy Director, Bureau of Transportation Planning at 517-373-0343. You may also contact Capt. Robert R. Powers, Commanding Officer of the State Police Motor Carrier Division at 517-336-6447.

Sincerely,

Greg Rosine
Chief Administrative Officer

Enclosure

cc: W. Hamilton, House Fiscal Agency
C. Thiel, Senate Fiscal Agency

BTP:TPS;jlb:pah

bcc: L. Lambert T. Horsfall
S. Mortel J. Kraus
J. Brush Col. Robinson
S. Benton Capt. Powers

**MICHIGAN TRUCK
WEIGHT ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM**

SECTION 337 REPORT

TO

**SENATE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION**

Prepared by

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE**

March 2000

Submitted by

**Col. Michael D. Robinson, Director
Michigan Department of State Police**

**James R. DeSana, Director
Michigan Department of Transportation**

Introduction

This report is filed in response to Sec. 337, PA 136, of 1999, otherwise known as the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Appropriations bill (Enrolled Senate Bill No. 372).

Sec. 337. The department and the department of state police shall jointly prepare a report for the house and senate appropriations subcommittees on transportation that provides a cost effective strategic direction for the motor carrier weight enforcement program. The report shall minimally address the role of existing weigh stations and the use of new technologies for mobile enforcement. This report shall be submitted not later than April 1, 2000.

MDOT and State Police Motor Carrier Division (MCD) are conducting a comprehensive analysis of relevant issues related to truck law enforcement and are working to develop cost effective strategies to improve enforcement of truck size and weight laws and enhance enforcement of truck laws in general.

During 1997 and 1998, the MCD conducted limited testing of the concept of shifting resources to place greater emphasis on mobile enforcement and less emphasis on scale house enforcement at interior weigh stations. Results suggested this strategy should be given consideration for permanent implementation.

In spring 1999, MCD approached MDOT with a proposal to close some interior weigh stations, deploy additional MCD officers to mobile patrol, and place greater emphasis on utilization of alternative enforcement technologies.

Consequently, MDOT and MCD formed a joint Weigh Station Strategies Committee, Chaired by MCD, which began meeting in August 1999. Membership on this committee included 5 MDOT and 5 MCD staff. A subcommittee was established to investigate advanced technologies and to assess the needs of expanded road patrol initiatives. MDOT and MCD will continue to work cooperatively toward full implementation of a shift in enforcement strategy which places more emphasis on mobile enforcement.

Background

Weigh stations were built along public roads to protect the public investment in infrastructure from premature deterioration caused by overweight trucks. Weigh stations have been around for decades and can probably be traced back to when roads were beginning to be paved and trucks were used to move cargo short distances. Weighmasters used weigh stations as an enforcement tool along with road patrol. MDOT has twenty weigh stations under its jurisdiction, mostly located on the interstate system in Southern Michigan. The majority of these weigh stations were built in the 1960's, prior to significant growth of Michigan's economy and interstate trucking.

Weigh stations were an effective enforcement and deterrent tool in the past. Because the road network for trucks was limited, weigh stations were not easy to avoid. Prior to the popularity of CB radios and cellular phones, the trucker had no prior knowledge of the operational status of the stations, even if the location was known. Today, the trucking industry's communication network is so efficient that shortly after "opening" a weigh station approaching truckers have heard the word.

Augmenting the traditional use of weigh stations and road patrols, the MCD utilizes Special Transportation Enforcement Teams (STET) which are set up periodically at strategic locations throughout the state. STET operations have the element of surprise, at least during the first few hours of operation, and have demonstrated that they are an effective means of expanding enforcement to areas other than at fixed weigh station locations.

MDOT and MCD share responsibilities for the development and operation of weigh stations. MDOT is responsible for the infrastructure including ramps, static scales, electronic weighing sensors in the pavement, parking lots, signing and the building structures. MCD is responsible for staffing and operating the weight stations, the interior of the buildings and routine maintenance of the static scales.

Joint Weigh Station Strategies Committee Recommendations/Activities to Date

The committee is continuing efforts to complete recommendations and develop implementation actions for both departments. Early committee activities included establishing an overall vision, identifying key issues to be addressed, and initiating activities which required further research and analysis of costs and effectiveness. The results of these activities will be used in the development of future implementation actions.

Changes in enforcement strategies and development of future enforcement actions includes the following items.

- Vision/Focus - Improve enforcement efficiency and effectiveness by placing greater emphasis on road patrol and less emphasis on the traditional use of interior weigh stations to lessen the predictability of enforcement and expand enforcement coverage area. Continue to focus efforts on major points of entry to the state. Provide an improved balance of enforcement coverage across the state. Incorporate improved technologies into regular enforcement operations.
- MCD has reassigned several motor carrier officers from scale sites to road patrol duty at work sites throughout the state where previously there had been no officer assigned, or where additional officers are required. (Still not every work site has an officer assigned.)
- MDOT and MCD are working with Federal Highway Administration officials to ensure new enforcement practices will continue to meet the Federal Size and Weight Enforcement requirements.
- MDOT is participating, with the City of Saline, in a research effort for improved design and construction of Permanent Intermittent Truck Weigh Sites (PITWS). PITWS are essentially large flat concrete slabs with a wide slot in the center that officers can place portable scales in. The truck can then move across the scale weighing each axle separately, which provide for efficient weigh locations in high volume areas.
- MCD and MDOT have identified six interior weigh stations to be considered for conversion to road based patrol operations use only, with no traditional scale house operations.
- MCD is investigating methods for improved efficiencies in road patrol truck weighing procedures such as carrying additional portable scales, weighing one side of the truck at a time, etc.
- MCD will increase use of MDOT's highway monitoring system (locations with electronic sensors installed in the pavement) to screen truck weights and plan enforcement action. MDOT will continue to provide training and support to MCD officers.
- MDOT is preparing cost estimates for the installation and operation of state-of-the-art electronic sensor sites which will allow motor carrier officers to dial into from the computer in their patrol vehicles and observe real time truck weights at priority locations to be included in a five-year capital investment plan.
- MDOT and MCD are establishing criteria for identifying priority locations for cost effective installation of enforcement aids like electronic screening, PITWS and safety pull out areas.